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The Cosmobiography Of Sun Ra: The Sound Of Joy Is Enlightening



Synopsis

Caldecott Medalist Chris Raschka shares his love of jazz great Sun Ra, just in time to mark the centennial of the musician's birth. Jazz musician Sun Ra (1914–1993) always said that he came from Saturn. Being from another planet, he was naturally intrigued by everything earthly – especially music, because music is the one thing on Earth most like the stars. Earthlings themselves confused Sun Ra, the way they sorted themselves by color and fought wars against one another. So he made music. And he traveled with other musicians and singers, calling themselves the Sun Ra Arkestra, playing, singing, and dancing for people all over the planet. Because music, he said, is what holds us all together. Join acclaimed author-illustrator Chris Raschka in celebrating a legend of the jazz world who was truly one of a kind.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 1000L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 40 pages

Publisher: Candlewick (May 13, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0763658065

ISBN-13: 978-0763658069

Product Dimensions: 8.2 x 0.4 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars – See all reviews (8 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #526,868 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #22 in Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Music > Jazz #134 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Musical #152 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Social Activists

Age Range: 6 - 9 years

Grade Level: 1 - 4

Customer Reviews

This is a wonderful 'children's book'! It has the playfulness and color that really described Sun Ra. Buy it for an adult or child or an adult that never grew up. Turn someone onto Sun Ra or make the day of a fan. Great gift.

What a great book. I remember hearing a children's book about Sun Ra was being written. I was very curious to see how that would be done. I can tell you it was done well. I don't have any kids but

this book is great. The illustrations are bursting with colors and ideas, and Sun Ra's story is perfect for kids. I have found him very inspiring in my life. I would think a lot of his ideas would be great to teach to children.

I have lived in Philadelphia long enough to have actually experienced a live concert by Sun Ra and his Arkestra (actually there were many names for the group of musicians but the word Arkestra was in all of them). That performance was as atonal as it was and the costumes worn by the leader and members of the musical aggregation were unlike any I had seen before (or since), and the same can be said for the music. To honor the Centenary of Ra's birth in 1914, children's book illustrator Chris Raschka has not only filled this slim 40-page hardbound children's book summarizing the facts of Ra's life and comparing Ra's feeling that he was from Saturn with being an African American in America before civil rights legislation. The illustrations will appeal to children as Raschka's work is colorful but they may be confused some of the text. This is a book that a parent probably needs to read to a child and then discuss the issues raised. Both race issues and musical styles are prime for discussion. Of course any adult fan of Ra and his music will probably want this book too to place alongside the many vinyl record albums that Ra recorded always on independent labels since 1956. Ra died in 1993 two days short of his 79th birthday. I hope you found this review both informative and helpful. Steve Ramm Anything Phonographic •

Biographies are hard to get right in picture book form. Too often the writing is dry, recounting the facts about a person's life. Not so here! Raschka writes from the premise that musician Sun Ra was 100% correct when he claimed to be from Saturn. After all, writes Raschka, "it would explain so much." What follows is a fascinating tale even if you don't know the first thing about Sun Ra or his music. Raschka picks interesting details instead of following a straight biographical line of key events, and the book is stronger for it. A great place to start learning about Sun Ra, African-American musicians, or just to enjoy.

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